

East Central Idaho News

BONNEVILLE, BUTTE, CLARK, CUSTER, FREMONT, JEFFERSON, LEMHI, MADISON & TETON COUNTIES

ECONOMIC TRENDS

The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate decreased a tenth of a percentage point in February in the Idaho Falls Metropolitan Statistical Area as seen in East Central Idaho Table 1. There was little change in industry activity and no major business openings, but the pace should pick up as projects in the pipeline come to completion. Year-over-year, however, reflects several changes. Natural resources and mining lost 40 employees to construction when one business shifted its focus from mining to construction and building. In the same vein, professional and business services lost almost 4,000 employees when the location of those workers at the Idaho National Laboratory was correctly reported as Butte County, outside the metro area, instead of Bonneville County. As for real economic movement, education and construction jobs increased primarily due to population growth while wholesale trade decreased due to the timing of demand.

SPECIAL TOPIC: *New County Population Figures*

New 2006 county data reflects an overall increase of 4,490 in the population of east central Idaho. Not surprisingly, Bonneville County added almost 3,000 people, and Jefferson County recorded 800 more. Teton County added about 350, and its growth will continue at or above that pace with the explosion of elegant subdivisions currently under development. Three counties in the region placed in the top 10 of all Idaho counties in percent growth – Bonneville at 6 percent, Jefferson at 5 percent and Teton at 3 percent.

Clark and Custer counties actually reversed population declines in 2006 – Custer impressively gaining nearly 100

East Central Idaho Table 1: Idaho Falls MSA Labor Force & Employment
Bonneville and Jefferson counties

	Feb 2007*	Jan 2007	Feb 2006	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
<i>Seasonally Adjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	58,450	58,100	57,890	0.6	1.0
Unemployment	1,350	1,420	1,770	-4.9	-23.7
% of Labor Force Unemployed	2.3%	2.4%	3.1%		
Total Employment	57,100	56,680	56,130	0.7	1.7
<i>Unadjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	57,290	57,350	57,240	-0.1	0.1
Unemployment	1,820	1,930	2,280	-5.7	-20.2
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.2%	3.4%	4.0%		
Total Employment	55,480	55,420	54,960	0.1	0.9
JOB BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs** - NAICS	49,890	49,850	53,490	0.1	-6.7
<i>Goods-Producing Industries</i>	7,480	7,580	7,270	-1.3	2.9
Natural Resources & Mining	10	10	50	0.0	-80.0
Construction	4,060	4,130	3,850	-1.7	5.5
Manufacturing	3,410	3,440	3,370	-0.9	1.2
Food Manufacturing	1,090	1,110	1,050	-1.8	3.8
Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	240	240	250	0.0	-4.0
Machinery Manufacturing	150	150	150	0.0	0.0
Other Manufacturing	1,930	1,940	1,920	-0.5	0.5
<i>Service-Providing Industries</i>	42,410	42,270	46,220	0.3	-8.2
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	13,330	13,340	13,470	-0.1	-1.0
Wholesale Trade	3,950	3,950	4,180	0.0	-5.5
Retail Trade	7,600	7,600	7,650	0.0	-0.7
Utilities	60	50	50	20.0	20.0
Transportation	1,720	1,730	1,590	-0.6	8.2
Information	1,230	1,230	1,180	0.0	4.2
Financial Activities	2,210	2,220	2,140	-0.5	3.3
Professional & Business Services	5,500	5,510	9,480	-0.2	-42.0
Educational & Health Services	6,920	6,880	6,790	0.6	1.9
Leisure & Hospitality	4,360	4,310	4,420	1.2	-1.4
Other Services	1,930	1,910	2,040	1.0	-5.4
Government Education	3,740	3,630	3,470	3.0	7.8
Government Administration	3,190	3,250	3,230	-1.8	-1.2

*Preliminary Estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

and Clark essentially stabilizing after seeing its population drop 10 percent since the census. Fremont County stopped a one-year decline with a gain of 145 in 2006. Although Butte County has been on a losing streak since 2003, its population also appeared to stabilize between 2006 and 2005. Chart 1 on page 24 shows population by region with the new 2006 population data. East central Idaho comprises 13 percent of the state's total population and shows no signs

of varying from that level. Steady growth, possibly at a slower pace, will continue for quite some time.

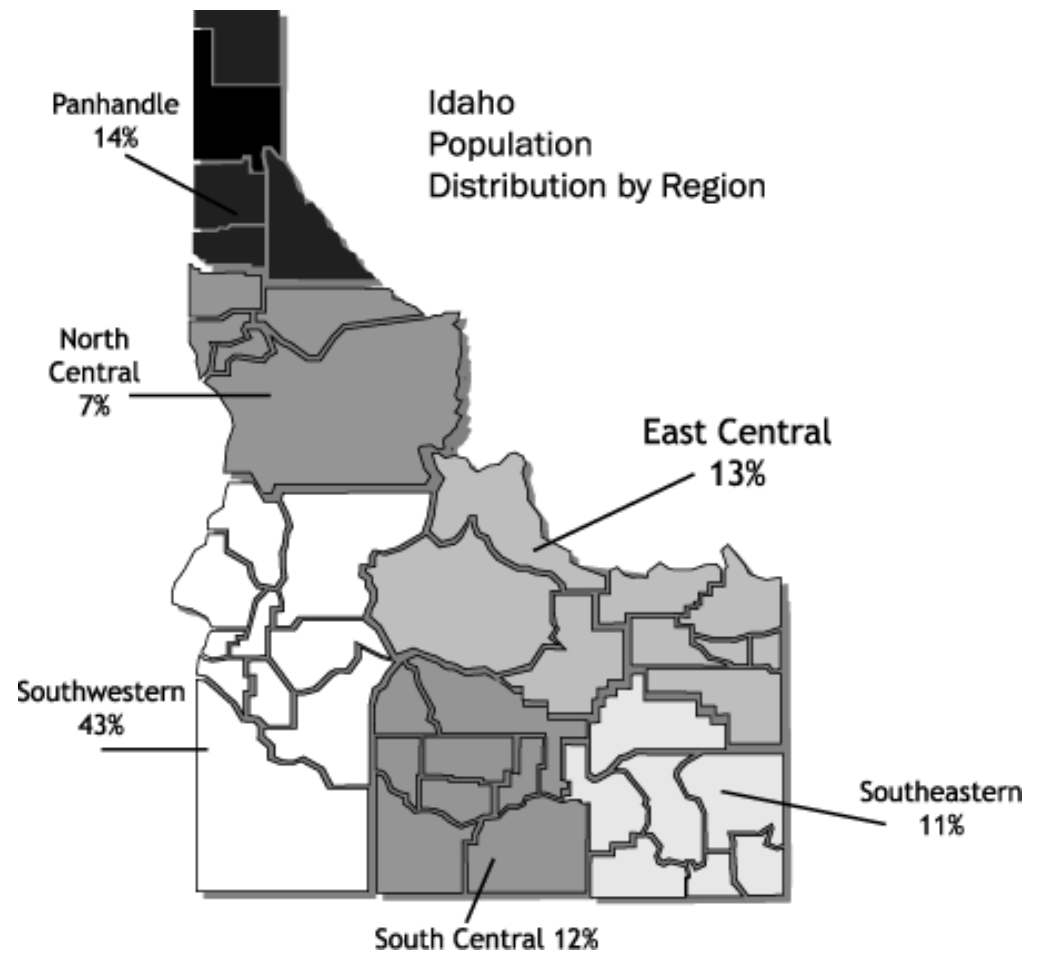
Looking at population changes since 2000, Bonneville County added over 12,000 people and remains the fourth largest county in the state. Madison added just under 4,000 and Jefferson almost 3,200. Madison County ranks 11th and Jefferson County 14th. Butte ranked 42nd and Clark 44th with the other counties in the region falling between those two groups.

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

BONNEVILLE COUNTY

- Mountain West Senior Housing LLC, headquartered in Oregon, is building a retirement center in Idaho Falls, comprised of an 87-unit independent living wing, a 66-unit assisted living wing and a 20-unit “memory care” facility on 10 acres. Another five duplex cottages will be added later. Mountain West already has 26 facilities in Washington and Oregon.
- Scout N’Powersports opened in downtown Idaho Falls, offering scooters, gear and accessories. With gas prices rising again, owners Jake and Jana Fuller believe they have a potentially large customer base since motorized scooters get between 80 and 100 miles per gallon.
- Idaho Falls is on another top 10 list — one of the top 10 best, cheapest and safest places to live. The list can be accessed at <http://www.bestplaces.net/> as Sperling’s BestPlaces study. Idaho Falls is second for the best affordable places to live and work. Being close to Yellowstone National Park and Grand Teton National Park, along with the magnificent scenery and top-notch recreation, helped. The town is “big enough to have everything you need, but small enough to feel personal,” one comment from the Web site states.

East Central Idaho Chart 1: Idaho Population Distribution by Region.



JEFFERSON COUNTY

- The city of Rigby hired Mike McCowin as a new building official/inspector. Now the city has its own building department after using the county’s until now. McCowin used to work for the county so he is already familiar with the job. McCowin is certified to inspect both residential and commercial buildings.

MADISON COUNTY

- Madison County and the cities of Rexburg and Sugar City have agreed to hire Cooper, Roberts and Simonsen and Associates of Salt Lake City to develop the multijurisdictional comprehensive plan’s ordinances and make sure they are all up to date with all the new development.

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